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RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA IMMEDIATE 0560  
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ MAY 9808  
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA IMMEDIATE 3598  
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE 1718  
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE 0610  
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL IMMEDIATE 0387  
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SUBJECT: FM CARRION CRITICAL OF USG TERRORISM REPORT

Classified By: PolOff Jarahn Hillsman, Reasons 1.4 (b&d)

¶1. (C) Summary: FM Francisco Carrion on April 30 publicly regretted the Department's 2005 Country Report on Terrorism for Ecuador. He refuted the report's claim that Ecuador's historical neglect of the region had compounded its current woes, and rejected assertions that Ecuador is neutral in the regional narco-terrorist effort. Carrion said that the GOE remains committed to fighting terrorism and narco-trafficking, but would not be pressured by the U.S. to intervene in Colombia's internal conflict. Privately, Carrion's protest was more muted; we do not believe the flap will damage ongoing security cooperation. End Summary.

No Neglect of Border  
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¶2. (SBU) FM Carrion, responding to the Department's 2005 Country Report on Terrorism for Ecuador, told the press on April 30 certain assertions in the report were "unacceptable" Ecuador. He rejected the suggestion that Ecuador's historical neglect of the region had caused a rise of narco-terrorist influence in the area. Despite limited resources, he said, Ecuador has moved 7-8,000 troops to the border region to prevent the use of Ecuadorian territory by Colombian irregulars and to combat illicit activity. Rather than criticize GOE efforts, he said, the U.S. should assist Ecuador with this expense, and encourage the GOC to do more to secure its southern border. Carrion also affirmed the GOE's commitment to encouraging socioeconomic development in the region, citing recent bi-national integrated development agreements with Colombia as evidence.

Ecuador Won't Be Pulled in  
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¶3. (SBU) Carrion objected to the report's reference to GOE "neutrality" in the regional narco-terrorist fight, adding that Ecuador has demonstrated its commitment to combat narco-trafficking and terrorism. He said that the GOE would not be pressured into entering Colombia's internal conflict, but would remain faithful to its historic tradition of non-intervention in the internal affairs of its neighbors.

¶4. (SBU) Responding to press inquiries about how his criticism of the report might affect GOE hopes of returning to FTA negotiations, Carrion said that the FTA was a separate issue. He stated emphatically that the GOE would not sacrifice its principles and national interest to conclude FTA negotiations, no matter how beneficial to Ecuador.

Ecuador had amply demonstrated its resolve to combat narco-terrorist encroachment out of principle, not due to external pressure, he said.

Private Conversation

15. (C) On May 2, during a private meeting with the Ambassador on another subject, Carrion referred to the report, calling it "unfair." The Ambassador noted that the report had a balance of negative and positive points.

Comment

16. (C) Carrion's muted private protest suggests his public statements were for local consumption. We appear to be over this flap and do not believe USG-GOE CN and CT cooperation will be damaged by the report's reception here. We are also convinced that USG interests are best served by highlighting ongoing cooperation with the GOE. The mission released a press bulletin noting the positive points of Ecuadorian cooperation during the year.

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